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AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED

AT THE

MEETING-HOUSE

IN

BENNINGTON,

ON THE

4th of July, 1806.

~~~~~  
BY O. C. MERRILL.  
~~~~~

“ A cause like ours is its own sacrament.
“ Truth, justice, reason, love and liberty,
“ The eternal links that clasp the world are in it,
“ And he who breaks their sanction, breaks all law
“ And infinite connection.” — HENRY BROCKE.

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Bennington, 4th July, 1806.

SIR,

In compliance with the unanimous vote of the Gentlemen assembled at the State-Arms Hall, we have the pleasure of presenting you their thanks for your ORATION, this day delivered, and request a copy for the press, that others with them may be benefited by the instruction it contains.

We are, with sentiments of cordial esteem,

Sir, Yours,

DAVID ROBINSON,	}	<i>Committee of Arrangements.</i>
BENJAMIN FASSET,		
WM. HENRY, jun.		
ANDREW SELDEN,		

ORSAMUS C. MERRILL, Esq.

AN ORATION.

THE spirit of our celebration is the rehearsal of the testimony of our political redemption, and of the duties essential to the preservation of the institutions, resulting from it in a chain of events.

While Liberty remains an object of our desire and love, the way and price of our redemption, how the Heroes looked, how they felt, and how they acted, will be interesting ;—and while in these things, we take an interest, the day of our festival will be particularly, and invariably distinguished—we shall assemble in commemoration of it, and think our time and property better appropriated, than in building proud mausoleums, or erecting marble pillars of remembrance.—Our meetings once a year, will be living, animated, glowing testimonials of our national nativity, and of our gratitude to the great and good Being, whose propitious providence has appointed for us a select and vast congregation of blessings, flowing free as living

and limpid streams, from social and religious liberty, and from a soil and clime productive and salubrious.

The *Declaration of Independence*, which has been read, was, to England, a solemn and impressive commentary on the folly and ridiculous vanity of their proceedings—to us, it is a lucid *mémorial* of the motives which awoke those manly exertions, that gave birth to a Republic—It is an intelligent witness, a summary and comprehensive rehearsal, of the pride and insolence of our revolutionary adversary.

Antecedent to our Independence, the kingdom of England had arisen to the zenith of its power, both in the old world and the new—they boasted prerogative in every clime — Filled with their greatness, and because we were descendants of their isle, they presumed to do more than *decimate* the fruits of American industry, they presumed to “bind us in all cases whatsoever.”—But the plenitude of kingly omnipotence was insufficient to effect it, by sophistry and stratagem.

In the vindictive paroxisms of their exasperated pride, they meditated and matured the project of driving Liberty, by force, from this her last asylum—of driving her from the woody shores of America, to wander again upon the

earth, without any fixed abode, as a forlorn and unfriended fugitive.

The Genius of Liberty saw, with sensibility, the unwelcome crisis approaching, and wept for the sufferings of America—She wept, that her footsteps should be wet with the blood of her followers !

The armaments of the enemy came to our land—their vassals and mercenaries commenced the bloody work. Wretched and menacing was the aspect of the times. The hardy disciples, and choice spirits of Liberty, met the onset unappalled---they never bowed to their fears :-- Yet they were not trained or inured to war; and under the guidance of their Chief, prudently acted on the defensive ; they kept aloof, like retiring winds, to renew and recruit their strength. The temporary consequence was, an apparent success to the arms of Britain.-----But while their official minions were mounting the highest pinnacle of exultation, and saw, in fancy, the tents of America in affliction, the people scattered, and fleeing to their mountains for refuge, or imploring the clemency of their conquerors, on terms of unconditional submission—that Power, at whose behest “dread thunders roll, and livid lightnings play”—that

Power, whose friendly omniscient eye beholds the form and pressure of every swift continuance—beholds all the successive ties of natural and moral action, down the long series of eventful years—that sovereign, mighty Power, commissioned the spirit of '76, to speak the bold accents of Liberty, to proclaim to the king of the isles, and the world, that the kingdom had departed from Britain, and the people of fertile America----were free----were sovereign----were independent !

These are the events we commemorate ; they are distant, and now seen through the vista of years ; but whenever we meditate upon them, we do well to reflect, they were the offspring of the understanding and virtue of the American people, a nation the immortal Sovereign of earth and heaven in mercy delights to honor.

These things are familiar to you all ; yet the spirit of Independence, who will lead the generations on to higher and more charming scenes of freedom, delights to lead her votaries thro' the rolls of history and of memory, to the deeds of their fathers—But they are so engraven on the heart, so frequently bro't in review before us, and so congenial to the benevolent mind, that they need only to be allusively mentioned, to be

felt and understood in all their details—I say, to the affectionate Republican, a bare allusion to them, speaks to his heart in natural and prevailing pathos---He feels the throb of affection, for the institutions which were the result of their toil and labor, their privations and dangers——He feels his political existence entwined with these events, these institutions, and their lively remembrance—He loves the exhilarating and chastening influence of the spirit of Independence, and his tho'ts in humility ascend to the pure source from whence it emanates, the throne of GOD. Returning back to earth, his soul looks forth from the clouds of prejudice, in all the majesty and loveliness of active philanthropy, and contemplates its diffusion and perpetuation as a paramount duty, and the performance of this duty, the genuine effusion of gratitude to that Power, which made the happiness of man commensurate with its prevalence.

Thus felt our renowned Ancestors, and they followed the divine impulse. They were united and resolute, wise and prescient; and were permitted to fill up the measure of their usefulness—they finished the political work they had to do.

Their energies were first directed to the wresting of the sceptre of *public power* from the grasp of tyranny—they did it. Their next step was to place this power high above, and secure from, the reach of sudden innovation—they did it—they plated it in the hearts of the freemen of America; and they made this deposit, with high assurance, and for the express purpose that it should be used as the *shield* of oppressed humanity, and no longer as the *sword* of wounding and extermination. This, to their enlightened eyes, was the “little cloud” seen from mount Carmel, by the servant of Elijah the Tishbite, minutely rising from off the sea, “like a man’s hand,” which was to water and revive, in all ages, the plant of Liberty.

This accomplished, they “looked well to the ways of the household;” they were not “careless and secure;” they were the active, and ardent, and fast friends of Liberty; and they secured, as far as human prudence and prescience could secure, its blessings to posterity. They gave to us political life, and the means essential to its peaceful preservation and improvement.

This was the inestimable store of political wealth, they solemnly bequeathed to us: Shall we forget their blood-washed garments—shall

we be prodigal of the inheritance? These are the important items of their account against us. Shall we fraudulently blot out the account? Shall we shut up the book, and forget the obligation? Shall we misuse the deposit? “If ye will enquire, enquire ye;” for here is the hinge upon which turns our massive individual and collective duties, our national prosperity and preeminence.

From this view of the subject, it stands us in hand to examine, whether things now remain as they were, when our fathers were laid asleep—to scrutinize the governmental precedents since established, their bearing upon the principles of republican liberty, and the purposes of the deposit. Has government been used as the *shield* of oppressed humanity? or has it been converted by oppressors, into a *sword* of wounding?—What description of characters have used it as a shield of defence, and what characters have used it as a sword of offence, I purpose to examine.

Ingenuity may dress *wrong* in the habiliments of *right*, and tyranny may assume the robes of republican clemency; but the disguise will never be concealed for any length of time. Their arts and address may at first dazzle, but a familiar and close acquaintance, bedims the varnish of deception, and exposes the reality.

We have evidence, that the effrontery of party, may make men audaciously put on a tattered garment, a robe of patch-work, and eulogize it, as the mantle which fell from the chariot of an ascending WASHINGTON!—But the delusion is temporary—the unsophisticated mind of man will seek its level.

A sentiment, imprecating religious intolerance and persecution, and which has its foundation in the Christian Religion, can be tortured into a tenet embracing a belief of twenty Gods, or no God—and by dint of clamor, may excite a hostile alarm and agitation; but the evil recoils with velocity upon the heads of those who gave currency and direction to the imposition—because it will compel an enquiring and considerate people, to examine the text, as well as its comments.

These caves, like the stories of the Ocean Massacre, Illuminatism, and myriads of others which might be recited, where exposure and confusion frequently trod upon the heels of delusion, ought not, however, in their effects upon the body politic, to be considered of a light and transient nature, but of a nature dangerous to the great purposes for which our privileges were established—they are “like tottering tow-

ert, which draw contiguous ruin;" and great and portentous is the danger, when the promulgators are men to whom the people have given official consequence.

These are no ideal, or premature speculations; they are demonstrative facts—they are not left without many witnesses, in that the practice continueth to this hour.

I would ask, if there is one in this assembly, who has not evidence in his own knowledge, that there is a class of men among us, that have by these acts, or by ten thousand similar or more disreputable impositions, endeavored to ingratiate themselves with the source of power? I would ask, if fertility in fabrication, zeal in its propagation and industry in exciting alarms, has not been the passport to offices, under the patronage of Federal incumbents.

This prostration of talents, if it does not amount to a full proof of an abandoned and vicious taste and disposition, and an attempt to turn the simple uses, and mild privileges of freemen into a sword of wounding, is at least no desirable trait in the character of those into whose hands the charge of the deposit of our fathers is given.

These impositions have the same stamp, the same origin, and the same tendency, with those “Lilliputian ties which bound us in the first slumbers which succeeded the labors” of the revolution; they then were the introduction to those more bold governmental precedents, designed to impose upon us the substance of the British government, a government, where public power is a sword, an instrument of sanguinary infliction, and where oppression rides upon the necks of its suffering subjects—a government, whose insatiable love of domination has shed the blood of Americans, and from whom we were severed but thirty years ago: And yet, with astonishment be it spoken, this government has been the subject of American eulogy, and the eulogist, in consequence of this his predilection, made President of the United States!—After his investiture, he closed the book of revolutionary gratitude, and compassionate regard for the human race—he ascribed to this government whatsoever things are pure and wise, and incessantly labored to assimilate our social regulations to it.

No disposition exists, neither is it necessary, to arraign for the purpose of reproach, the motives of this administration, or the class of men

who approbate its measures.—But a statement of facts, and the obvious tendency of their conduct and opinions, must, from its nature, be a most cutting rebuke, a most pungent reproach.—

Whenever a disquisition is made upon this head, and the observations come charged with severity, it must be imputed to the subject-matter, and not to any malignant desire to reflect upon, or exult over a vanquished enemy. But inasmuch as their measures had an evident tendency to privilege those in place, to stretch to the utmost the constitutional prerogatives of our Executive, and occasionally overstep its bounds, and to introduce anew the political heresies of those European governments, whose principles we had rejected—it is all-essential, all-important, their measures should be exhibited as an example, a lasting memorial to the people ; and it would be criminal tenderness to pavilion in silence their political extravagancies.

The Federal Government was no sooner organized, than we were relieved from our apprehensions, rescued from a stormy and eminently hazardous situation, and placed in one incomparably better than had ever been known in this or any other country ; it was virtually a shield, behind which the people found security.

And it would invariably have been a barrier against encroachments, had every administration under it, been consonant to a liberal and fair construction of its provisions and requirements.

In the prosperous state of affairs which marked the morning of the Federal Government, there were men insensible or indifferent to the blessings, even-handed and liberally dispensed to us, through this medium, and who directly discovered its only vulnerable point—to this their energies were directed. A combination was formed, and their leaders took rank as faith and credulity marshalled them. The reward for service, was the distribution of existing offices, which could be obtained by art and surprise; and the expectation of enjoying the advantages to be acquired, by an unfair and illiberal exposition of the constitutional allotment of power to the Executive—as by the increase of Executive power, patronage would be extended in an astonishing ratio; and as subordinate offices multiplied in number, the whole gained proportionately in permanency. Thus, as in the parable of Jotham, “fire came out of the bramble, and devoured the cedars of Lebanon.”

The watchword, of the coalition, was the inefficiency of Republics; and the want of

energy in ours to prolong the termination of its existence. Undoubtedly, this would not long have remained a paradox, had it been as easy to flatter, subsidize and arrange the vices of man to the purposes of private aggrandisement, and the monopoly of power, in large agricultural republics, as it is in small military and commercial ones. But the event has happily proved the assertion contrary to appearance and reality.

The republics that have had their day, arise through the medium of history, and offer themselves as examples, illustrative of the fatal tendency of the measures pursued by the coalition. The local situation, as well as the manners of the age, in which one class of them flourished, made it necessary, that their government and education should be military; which virtually amounted to a dismissal of every useful embellishment of the understanding. Their agricultural interests were so greatly subordinate that the tillage of the ground was considered a business suitable for their Helots or slaves, but unworthy the pursuit of a freeman. This situation produced a restive and predatory spirit; made their freemen desirous of distinction, by the display of their dexterity in the then favorite art of war; and when it occasionally happened,

that conquest was satiated, the objects inviting to the warrior diminished, and the arts of peace, like birds of passage, made their appearance; their superior riches and flourishing condition, or the recollection of past injuries, invited aggression, from various surrounding warlike nations. A high state of martial discipline, became of consequence essential to national safety, until the minds of the freemen, accustomed to this anti-republican subordination, were callous to independence. Hence it befel these republics, as it befalls all military establishments, when they could not prey upon others, and others did not prey upon them, they preyed upon themselves; aspiring geniuses seized the advantage this posture of affairs offered them, and rose to preferment and unlimited power.

The commercial republics that have existed, from their management, have solicited and felt the same evils. They, like military republics, have been beasts of prey. The means have been variant, but their tendency invariably the same; one caught their prey by open force and agility---the other compassed its object by art and stratagem.

Commercial ascendancy, has ever corrupted, emasculated, and put to sleep, the watchful and

independent spirit of republicanism ; or by countenancing gradual innovation and monopoly, has sapped its energies. The effect was inevitable. Aristocracies arose. The same predatory system was pursued ; the same immanent, corrupt disposition remained. Their divisions in turn lacerated and tore the vitals of their country, and limited monarchy or despotism, or entire subjugation by external enemies, closed the scene, and their name has disappeared from the map of nations, except to tell where they once flourished.

The mixed government of England, is a compound of the evils of every government ; of course, the most stupendous fabric of corrupt materials that the ingenuity of man ever framed, for public use.

But here is a warning, also, solemn and awful. All the rights the people ever had, have been long since merged in the power, the corruptions, and the excessive oppressions of government—it is now tottering to its fall ; “fear trembles in its cement ;” and it is driving upon destruction, as sure and rapidly as the advance of time, to its plunge into the ocean of eternity. Hence the magnitude of the evil—hence the turpitude of those whose measures have approximated our

government to this.—Why did they seize, with greedy hand, a little brief authority, to introduce a military establishment?—Why strengthen the commercial interest, by a maritime establishment, at the expence of the farming?—Wherefore the policy of the confederacy, in introducing systems which have been so noxious to republics, and so friendly to the encroachments of power, unless it was to shorten the tenure of Republicanism, and cast a sombrous shade over the memory of our fathers.—It must therefore be recognized as a fact, that a combination, whose measures are manifestly prejudicial to agricultural ascendancy, will have all the properties of an aristocracy, and all the effects of a tyranny.

This confederacy was proverbially “avaricious freedom”—their whole system was to engross and accumulate this treasure to themselves, and never to impart its benefits to their fellow-men.

This coalition was composed of various descriptions of men. The first in order I shall mention, are the most worthy and honest—these are the disciples of the Old School, the opposers of the revolution, who, in all their walks, have shewed themselves constitutionally uneasy at

the progress of general and equal happiness, and who have ever been recognized as the same beings under the new system as the old—bigoted in their own way, they are obnoxious to improvement, from the practical lessons of republicanism, and incapable of that broad and ardent philanthropy, which seizes, with affectionate avidity, the first dawnings of liberty, as the advent of repose and happiness to man, as the certain prelibation of the amendment of his condition. This part of the coalition took for their motto, *Order*.

The remaining constituent parts of the coalition, had a venal friendship for the revolution.

The next in order come the new converts to the same antiquated and tyrannical doctrine; they appeared in all the brilliance of wealth.—These had deviated from a rational estimate of things, in their superlative attachment to property, from its answering the purposes of European monarchical parade, and its becoming the procurator of respect in all governments, except Republics.—From this irrational estimate of man, they soon found themselves insulated from the terra-firma of republics, and entered the confederacy against them—from these originated the motto, *Property*.

The next in order were learned, ambitious, and rash adventurers, who were flushed with college notions of their superiority over the laboring part of community—and upon this surreptitious importance, they rested their pretensions to distinction in government. These, in the early period of the revolution, were Alexanders and Cæsars, in their own conception. Inflamed by reading the fluctuations of power in Greece and Rome, they shed, like Cæsar, “tears of ambition,” and were inebriated with the idea of suddenly raising themselves to future admiration and wonder, from the mistaken notion of the instability of republics.—These candidates for renown, presumed too much upon their own consequence, and too little upon the intelligence they would have to encounter.—They otherwise deceived themselves, by imagining that the basis of a large Republic, was more fragile and subject to vicissitude, than a small Republic. In this, they “embraced a cloud instead of a goddess:” they never reflected, that a representative agricultural Republic, was variant from a military one—or that it was easier to concentrate the influences which make for ambition, in a crowded population, than where it was extensive and scattered—easier in a

commercial city, than in the half of a continent. It is probable they found out their error, previous to the organization of the coalition ; and that by entering into it, and siding against the rights of the people generally, they had an expectation of slowly but substantially acquiring that preferment, which, in their first start for the goal of ambition, they had expected would burst upon them suddenly, in full-orbed effulgence. But the imposition was, like their logic, too superficial. The inscription of their order was, *Learning and Talents*.

There was another portion, who, as Parson Osgood expresses it, were in "desperate circumstances, and whose only hope of bettering them, is in revolutions of government," the confusion and tumults of life. The motto of their standard was, *Honesty*.

Another very important description, consisted of commercial men, and British agents and subjects in the same business.—These had high and blooming expectations of reaping obvious and certain advantages, as will be more clearly seen from a synopsis of the objects and reasoning of the coalition : which were, to assimilate this government to the British, and to bring the minds of Americans back to an acquiescence in

the despotic principles of the Old School, which, in part, consisted of a deferential adoration of titles and property—And inasmuch as mental pre-eminence, and physical symmetry and power, could not be made hereditary, these must be. That is, because intrinsic worth and personal merit, cannot descend from father to son, veneration must be attached to ideal and inanimate things, which could be so managed, as to perpetuate family consequence, whether incorrigibly vicious, or idiots. This could not be effected, without creating a predatory spirit, to war with our institutions, morals, and habits. To engender this, our wholesome regulations must be fettered with all the mysterious apparatus of European policy—the establishment of a navy, a funding system, an army, and placemen, retainers, and expectants. Preliminary to the achievement, and support of these assumptions, our sentiments of republican simplicity, and constitutional affection, must undergo a radical change. To produce this change, the commercial interest must furnish the greatest proportion of the contaminating materials, which the genius of the *outs* and *ins* of the coalition, could form into engines of oppression and terror, or modify to the purposes

of fascination. The result of such a state of things, would be an increased demand for the luxurious commodities of commerce, a lessening of risk from maritime protection---an enhancement of profits---a more close and cordial union of this interest, with our own government, to the great detriment of the agricultural---and a sure pledge of British patronage. Here then were clustering benefits. These advantages, with the aids of the banking system, and military interest, were sufficient inducements for them to coalesce against the plain and unadorned manners of republicanism. Their motto, however, was *Republicanism and Virtue*.

But as the press, was an almost insuperable impediment to the accomplishment and perpetuity of these designs; and as sedition and common law, were in some respects inadequate to the work of suppression, a majority of the clergy must be listed in offset, who would turn their pulpits into "whited sepulchres," and rostrums, for preaching the political religion of the confederates; otherwise it would be very difficult to demoralize and to lead the people to adopt as legitimate, the substance of the British government, in exchange for their liberty, or to leave the "simple uses of property," for the useless

pageantry of office, and the cumbrous grandeur of a wealthy nobility; especially as their condition would be reduced to a level with that of a sumpter-mule, to move in all the pride of harness, and to bear a burden which they could not taste. This part of the coalition, the clergy, were the only ones *disinterested*, and whose views rose above sublunary considerations. But a refined humility, a sequestered life, a total inappetency to fading things, and their easy accommodating desires, did not qualify them obstinately to withstand the earnest importunities of artful men, or to resist the bewitching prospect of church dignities, and sacerdotal emoluments.---The inscription on their flag, was *Religion*, in large and imposing characters.

Besides these classes of men, were others, who would rather government should be “propped up” on the “tottering footstool of imposition,” than on the “solid basis of reason.” And some who were dazzled with the glare of things, but who were too indolent to examine, were senselessly carried with the current, and served as dead weights in the opposite scale to the republican. Hence the modern definition of *Federalism*, which means an affection for the coalition formed against the liberties of America.---

Hence it would appear, that this anti-republican confederacy, in case they assumed appropriate mottos, did possess, as they frequently have told us, all the order, the property, the learning, the talents, the honesty, the republicanism, the virtue, and religion of the country.-----This last observation might appear unimportant, if we had not experimental knowledge of the assumption of all this, by the party of which I am speaking; if we did not know that it has had considerable effect on the minds of an American public---and that this same proposition has formed no inconsiderable part of the absurdities and delusions of the day.

“The business of sober philosophy, (says the author of the *Vision of Columbus*) is often a task of drudgery—it must sometimes listen to the most incoherent clamors, which must be unworthy of its attention, did they not form a part of the general din, by which mankind are deafened and misled.”

Their first work towards the abandonment, and final departure from revolutionary principles, I repeat, was to enlist the passions, the prejudices, the habits, the fashions, and the splendors, incidental to, and congenial with, Aristocracy.-----This finished and mental recti-

tude, and external simplicity, in appearance, banished into the obscure walks of private life, or to the cottage of penury, by the substitution of their opposites, external and fallacious signs of merit, and individual pomp and magnificence; nothing remained to make it virtually so, but the enactment of laws in derogation of the constitution, and the manufacture of hereditary dignities, and badges of respect, as the emblems and sanctions of a government, unnatural and degrading to the governed---a government which was to *shield* a few, and to be a *sword* of wounding to all others.

Thus was a combination formed, which labored to bring back the sceptre of *public power*, to the grasp of tyranny from which our fathers wrested it. A specification of the precedents adopted to compass this object, and how nearly it was accomplished---and how the whole of their machinations, under God, were frustated, and the sceptre of Public Power regained, and placed where the individual wishes, and collected wisdom of Republicans desired it, remains to be shown.

Although signs and tokens of revolt from Constitutional grounds antecedently appeared in pantomime, we consider the British Treaty the

first bold and disgraceful act, taken by the coalition, for re-union with Great-Britain, and the annihilation of American independence. This was so palpably wrong and humiliating, that the prudent WASHINGTON declared, he never could consent to put his signature to it, as it was---but the defection of his Secretary, directly after, so altered, in his estimation, the face of our foreign relations, that he reluctantly signed it.-----The integrity of President Washington, shook with fears the coalition, but did not relax their activity.—In the course of carrying the Grenville Treaty into operation, two important constitutional points were bro't under consideration, by the agents of the coalition, who were bent upon trying whether the Constitution, the guarantee of liberty, possessed more potency than a clean piece of parchment. The Constitution vests the right of regulating commerce in Congress, together with the right to make appropriations of money.---The members of the confederacy in place, determined upon working the privilege of the People into Executive prerogative, now resolutely broke the ground of assumption, and contended violently for the principle, that the treaty-making power belonged exclusively and of right, to the Execu-

tive---and the right to *demand* appropriations of Congress, to carry treaties into effect.

Admitting the clauses vesting these checks powers in Congress, were couched in general and ambiguous language ; they ought to have had a fair and liberal construction ; and in case of inclination any way, it should have been in favor of privilege, and against prerogative. But in these cases, there was a bearing manifestly contrary to the obvious meaning of the clause, upon which the powers assumed were predicated. President Washington undoubtedly saw, with mournful anticipation, the formidable current of innovation “ roll the ruin onward ;”---but, shrunk from the burden of opposition which was necessary to resist its progress, and stay its ravages.—Advanced in life, he could not “ breast the shock.” Tired of the cares incident to the presidency in ordinary times, he retired to private life, accompanied, no doubt, with the secret exultations, if not the advice and threats of the coalition-cabinet---for they trembled at his lofty attitude and firmness, on the first arrival of the Grenville Treaty, and dreaded the weight of his name, in case of open opposition.—Besides, his full coincidence with their views, was not to be expected, without a dereliction

from his former sentiments, without a total relinquishment of the merits of his military services, and the advantages gained by the virtue and heroism of our fathers.

The appointment of a successor, the prominent traits of whose political character, were his high-imbued predilection to the British government, and hostility to Republicanism, which, in his estimation, "meant any thing and nothing," was a consummation, equally important as the decline of Mr. Washington.

Among the instances of power surreptitiously acquired by the Adamite administration, we may rank the Alien Law, which gives to the Executive the power of sending emigrants out of the country, at his pleasure, who fled from the tyranny of Europe.

This is evidently contrary to the plain language of the Constitution, and very remote from any thing ever contemplated by its framers.--- They, with the tenderest impulses of humanity, and under the mildest beamings of commiseration and compassion for the sufferings of human nature, in every clime, offered to the "stranger and sojourner" an asylum, "commensurate with, and inseparable from," the American soil---and, I presume, little thought,

that ere the banner of renown had waved over their tombs for the space of twenty years, American humanity should have Chinese metes and bounds, and national liberality be narrowed down to the caprices and antipathies of an individual.

The correctness of what I have said will not be doubted, when I mention RUFUS KING's official letter, written in answer to certain applications made him, for the purpose of obtaining permission to emigrate to this country--- In this letter, he says, that the admission and residence of foreigners, *exclusively* belonged to the President. He further gives us the key which unlocks the intentions of the coalition, in the bestowment of this power --when he says in substance, that in consequence of his interference, he received advices, giving him assurances, that a particular description of persons in Ireland should not be allowed to emigrate, without *our* consent---take notice of the imperial words, *our consent* ;---because a large proportion of the emigrants from Ireland, arranged themselves on the side of the *malcontents*, (meaning the republicans) a French party, who had become more formidable than could have been apprehended, which required great watchfulness & activity from the government

to repress. Hence this law was intended to put down the republicans who were not natives, from a jealousy they would join malcontent republicans in the United States.

To curb native republicans, raise the creature above the creator, and prevent the strictures of the people upon the measures of their agents, the enactment of a sedition law, out of unconstitutional power, was necessary. The weaker advocates of this law, claimed for its basis, a mere quibble between the words *regulating* and *restraining* ; but its ablest advocates, have resorted to the comprehensive doctrine of implied power, as a justification. This, however, to the unsophisticated sense of mankind, does not amount to a possible justification, for the act is obviously in violation of the received and plain meaning of the constitutional clause, upon which it is predicated. I shall not be contradicted, when I say this law, was unworthy, was unlike our ancestors ; was anti-republican in its principles, and was oppressive in its operation. It had not the firm and serene look of our primitive patriots—but the angry and leering look of a despot. If any one doubts it, I appeal to the men who have seen informers, greedily, and invidiously hunting up victims ;

who have seen judges, giving judgment, and passing sentence of condemnation, with all the sourness and severity of angry justice---who have seen executive officers inflict the sentence of the law, in all the vindictive paroxisms of cruelty, and the poor Republican victim caged, "sick and in prison," because he would not offer up deferential adulation, or doubted a little less, or a little more, than the government standard.

The next obnoxious feature, is the *Army* establishment.

An army is a prolific source of evil, a grand engine of despotism---and never has there been an instance, where a standing army regularly maintained, failed of rendering the government independent of the people. It is a distinct interest from the people. It is arming the worst class in society, against the most meritorious---Its ranks are never filled with the independent farmer, or the industrious artizan---it is the indolent and dissipated part of the community, whose names are heard in the roll-call---these become incorporated with the government---they become manageable or turbulent beings---in either case, they are subverters of liberty---they either support the governing power, or

lift to supremacy their favorite officer.-----It is idle to say, Americans had not a standing army, but a *provisional* one.---The argument is deceptive. In England, the introduction of this odious establishment, was under the designation of the *King's life-guard*, and a *Parliamentary* army---Therefore, if it shews any thing, it is the *art* of the confederacy, and their preposterous imitation of British policy.

The cardinal duty of the soldiers of an army, is submission to their officers---prompt and implicit obedience;---and as they are submissive without resistance to the orders of officers they do not appoint---are governed by fear---they think the citizen in like manner, without a why or wherefore, should implicitly obey the governing powers in the civil department.----The officers of an army are frequently servile, venal beings; they regard themselves under personal obligation to the governing powers, and dependant upon their will, for the tenure of their offices; they therefore consult the interest and inclination of the government, follow with readiness its directions, and support its acts and opinions, however repugnant to general happiness.---Hence the predilection of monarchies for this establishment—hence the experiment in Ameri-

ca.—It was not raised as a defence against foreign invaders, but to war with the friends and principles of Liberty—not against foes without, but foes within. Appendant to this establishment, are alluring offices, posts, jobs, and contracts, for the partisans of government ——— Great God of Justice ! How ought our abhorrence to grow as we advance upon the subject, as we see the coalition arising in its different attitudes !

The maritime act, is one of the main pillars in the government-house of the coalition. The establishment of a navy is productive of more diffusive, yet latent evils, of course attaches to itself more plausibility. A navy is ostensibly, and in a great measure really is, established for the protection of commerce. A naval apparatus is also variously useful to a government hostile to Liberty—it gains over to a man the commercial interest—it is the stamina of a standing army, because it “multiplies the chances of incipient disputes.”—Government, through this medium, has more opportunities to enter into “entangling alliances” with belligerent powers, thereby provoking hostility, and inducing the necessity of a standing army.—No government, in its first start to despotism, would have the presumption

to raise troops, without some real motive, or fictitious alarm from exterior causes. A navy furnishes both, or either of these pretexts, suddenly, and in any governmental emergency ; because government with a navy can seek in all regions, occasions for offence, but without a navy it must wait until the opportunity offers itself. The men which compose the maritime strength, are as much subservient to the government, as those which compose the military ; and its internal subordination, is vastly more rigid and despotic---therefore, was open force necessary to uphold a system of governmental usurpation, and put down opposition, a navy at their beck, commands at once, the populous sea-port towns of America, and cooperates with the army. To this system are a very considerable number of offices, posts, jobs, and contracts attached, for gaining adherents to government.

To enlist on the side of government another interested class of men, money was borrowed at an usurious rate of interest. This was beneficial in strengthening the funding system---it was a new ligament, drawing closer the commercial, maritime, and military interests. It made more job and contract work, and thus was instrumental in gaining over or silencing

anti-partizans, and rewarding the adherents of government.

To secure the praises and support of the bigoted, their scruples must be obviated ; and to obviate these, the appearance and reputation of sanctity became essential : hence, the religious blandishments of the coalition---hence their attention to the outward forms of religion, to fast and thanksgiving ordinances, and outward respect for the clergy, preference of religious characters, and exclamations against infidelity and atheism.

There were many unofficial acts necessary to make the sanctions of government of force and operative upon the minds of the timid and ignorant. Hence, the vehement denunciations against those opposed to them---hence the vociferous invectives against the republicans, stiling them enemies of government, seditious disturbers, and dangerous disorganizers---hence the attempts to attach obloquy to all who presumed to animadvert upon the hostile tendency of their measures ;---from this source too is deduced the amazing inundation of adulatory addresses from the partizans of government, and the complacent answers vouchsafed in return. The dignified doctrines of the rights of man,

and the sovereignty of the people, were held up by the managers of the day, as tenets of reproach. they derided them as the extravagant chimeras, the mad theories, of an infuriated and infidel rabble;---and wagging their heads, pointed the finger of scorn at their advocates. Grades and distinctions entered into every village, & the doors of social intercourse were shut against all, whose language and opinions were not implicitly and actively coincident with the government. Thus the lovers of rank and etiquette sided with them, and the interested and the ignorant, the dissipated and the bigoted, found themselves "heads and points in the same truckle-bed."

Taking advantage from the experience of past eras, the errors and misfortunes of Republics, and improving upon the political chicanery of a Machiaval, a Richlieu, and a Pitt, they formed the most subtle and well barricaded coalition, that ever was previously formed for the enslavement of man. Trusting to the short comings of republicans, they burst the cloud which had covered their designs. Thus in the moment of surprise and astonishment which succeeded their introduction, the rapidity and celerity of their movements, were fast usurping a reign over us, and undermining the foundation of our liberties; thus a little territory only lay between us and

the wastes of tyranny---what a blast would its Siroc winds have brought upon the rich blessings of Heaven!---how would it have dissipated the inheritance of our fathers!

Heroes and Sages of our revolution, little did you think, that before the lapse of twice ten years, a faction would arise, who exultingly could see these monstrous reptiles of tyranny, coiling with tremendous velocity around the fair form of Liberty, and feel no horror, no compunction, not even compassion.

Fellow Citizens, I do not exaggerate—Federalism meditated the defilement and death of Liberty, and we were brought to the very verge of its terrible and ignominious reality: But Providence traced their parricidal steps through the night of Republicanism, disclosed their intentions, but stayed the actual perpetration of the crime. The political watchmen of America were upon their watch-towers, they were in their wards whole nights—they were inquired of in all the four winds of Heaven, watchmen, what of the times?—The night was long and dismal—but the republican day-star arose refulgent, and on the 4th of March, 1801, their morning came. The coalition chief had retired in night. Our much-loved institutions, knew

renovation---the *undulations* of tyranny ceased, and *harmony* was restored to social intercourse.

We are now reposing on the bosom of a government, bland, wise, and conciliatory.--- The very opposite to the one just spoken of--- The sovereignty of the people is recognized and operative—Executive patronage and prerogative have sought a republican level—the state governments, are more respected and vigorous—the judiciary establishment is reduced to reasonable bounds, and the course of justice, resuming the even scales, is restored to dignity—the sinking credit of the nation is recovered, and all the various concerns of the Republic, have generally felt its invigorating, its benign and chary influence. We contemplate this administration as a shield. Imbued with the spirit of '76, we see protection and defence, beam forth in every act—we see all the cherub charities of life, arranged as component parts. What are the splendid trophies of ancient or modern victors, compared with those bloodless ones which grace our republican triumph of 1801?

Yes, fellow Citizens, you passed sentence of condemnation upon the measures of the *federal* administration, and in that sentence have declared your detestation of the principles, that a standing

army is necessary to render government energetic; that investigation is more free and salutary, while confined within the bounds of a sedition law, and that fines and imprisonment are the most fit means to inculcate sound opinion, and an independent republican spirit. You have evinced a disrelish for those monarchical manners and distinctions, which were fast usurping a reign over us--you have declared your abhorrence of, and deep distress at, the repeated instances of individual oppression and cruelty, in beating, and bruising, and offering every indignity to those individuals, who amidst the tempest of tyrannic rage, and the threatenings of exasperated ambition, dared to be freemen. Let these things be enstamped on your memory, in characters deep and indelible, which no time, no situation, and death only can efface.

On the measures of the first term of the present administration, you have likewise formed your opinion --you have passed judgment---You have declared your approbation of the arrangements made to pay our national debt, of the abrogation of the excise law, of the abolition of a number of supernumerary offices, and the consequent retrenchment of expense, and the repeal of the judiciary system---You have felt dignified with

the name of American, when you have reflected upon the just and benevolent conduct which has been pursued towards European nations, and our savage neighbors. You have rejoiced, to see the attachment to republican simplicity and manners, exhibited in the conduct of your public officers—to see the right of discussing public measures and characters restored, and the most shameful slanders pass unnoticed, and left to the decision of the only legitimate tribunal, the People. With joy you have seen a return of social harmony, and neighborly intercourse, uninfected with the poison of distinction, and party enmity.

All these things you have examined and tested by the unerring standard of experience. The measures of the last session, whose effects are yet to be felt, and the utility of which has not been proved by experience, you have yet to watch. But I leave this exhilarating subject, to draw some improvement from the wilderness-times which preceded the Jeffersonian period.

After the close of our first revolution, naturally succeeded a period of relaxation and slumber. It was at this juncture that a confederacy against the people began to form itself, which well nigh compassed the death of our institutions. Since

our second bloodless redemption, we are resting from our labors. But are we not *too much* inclined to slumber? Have we nothing now to fear? Are we exempt from the danger of a new conspiracy? Is it to be expected, that the leaders of the coalition, exasperated at their own folly, and continual defeats, will become sincere converts to republicanism? They were, like Festus, "deaf to the words of truth and soberness"---Is it likely they will be restored to republicanism; to truth, and moderation?---No, they will not, they cannot, fellow-citizens----- They have waded so far into the waters of innovation, that they find it easier to go on, than to go back.---The Italian singer is easily deprived of his masculine faculties, but who shall give him back his virility?---Innocence is more easily seduced and corrupted, than restored to primitive purity. Exactly parallel is the situation of the man devoted by interest and habit to aristocracy. The season of remorse is past. Like Cæsar, he has waded the Rubicon----he has passed that bourne from whence no political traveller returns.

Let not the lustre of the present administration, obscure the memory of the past, or divert you from preparation for the future.----Let not

the stillness and placidity of public feeling deceive you, or make the monitions of prudence appear stale and unnecessary.-----With what facility do individuals fabricate arguments to support beliefs and actions, which are most consonant to their own inclinations, and particular interests? When private interest or inclination interfere with public duties, how active is the mind in inventing subterfuges to silence the whisperings of conscience? How soon do the firm-wrought systems of reason, vanish before the fictions of artful evasion, suggested by interest or ambition? On no subject do we see this principle more fully exemplified, than in that of politics. Those who are accused of a want of activity and attention, will shield themselves by saying, "it does no good to make exertion; man is naturally a tyrant, and it is impossible to guard against tyrannic acts." Tell the man who is fond of distinction, that it is essential to our government, to preserve a simplicity of manners, and that it is the duty of every one to endeavor, not only by persuasion but example, to introduce and observe republican habits: He will reply, that distinctions will always exist in society, and it is vain to attempt to change the nature of man,----It must be with melancholy,

that the friend of government bears such sentiments.-----Shall we then make no approaches towards a state of perfectibility, because we can never expect to arrive to a state of perfection? Shall we cease to combat with vice, because we cannot entirely destroy it? Shall we, because we cannot destroy the SEEDS of tyranny, not attempt to retard their growth? Shall we not strive to reform abuses in government, because we cannot render it invulnerable to the attacks of its enemies? *Imperfections* are the inseparable concomitants of humanity, yet man is endowed with a capacity to be continually lessening and correcting them.

Hence results the great duty of man, to be continually marching on in the road of industrious study and investigation, and unceasingly engaged in purifying himself from error.

All governments necessarily contain some seeds of evil, and their excellency is in proportion to their exclusion of these, and their means of preventing their growth.---Hence results the duty of freemen---although we cannot root out all evils from government, yet we must be continually lessening their number, and softening their effects, unseduced by the allurements of private gain, or the solicitations of ambition.---

not suffering the gloom of despair to unnerve, or the dazzling of success to blind. The true Republican holds on his way, with a zeal that “never tires,” and a determination that always ensures success.

Among the most important duties of freemen, is the selecting their public officers-----on the faithful discharge of which depends the existence of our constitution and liberties.-----The *will* of the people, is the only legitimate law of our country ; and this *will* is to be known by agents chosen by the people---therefore, the right of the people to elect these organs of their will, is the foundation of republicanism, the soul of our political body, which regulates every movement, and shapes every measure of our government.---If the people are sufficiently attentive to their interests, *laws* will be an exact transcript of their will ; but if, through their negligence, or deception, persons are elected, whose opinions are not coincident with theirs, or who abuse their confidence, laws then become mere regulations of individual interest or ambition.--To discharge this right, then, requires the most unceasing, ardent vigilance, and careful observation, the most watchful and piercing inspection into the characters, and sentiments, of candidates for office.

The dissimulation and arts that are made use of, to conceal real sentiments from the public eye, or cloak them under a popular garb, render the people more liable to deception and imposition, on this, than any other subject.---In times of great national agitation, when questions of great importance are before the public, the necessity of energetic action, and determined opinion, will not suffer individuals to mask and disguise their principles---and the warmth of feeling occasioned, fully evinces the character and sentiments of all; hence the boundary line between individual opinion, is easily drawn.---- But when the waves of dissension have subsided, and a calm ensues, the individual assumes an altered aspect, a different appearance;---his zeal becomes relaxed, and no longer urges him to an exposure of his principles;---- he can now adjust them to answer the various ends, which interest or ambition may suggest--- and thus his real sentiments become disguised, and unknown.

Does not the history of our own country, furnish an illustration of this position?---When a few years since, our nation was convulsed by the throes of tyrannic madness--when usurpation had defaced the fairest features of our constitu-

tion, and domestic oppression was fast chasing away the pure principles of republicanism, and the awful decision making, that was to determine its fate---there was no *neutral* ground, the sentiments of all were written on their foreheads, and the line of separation was discoverable to all. But when justice and liberty had once more resumed their empire, dispersed the cloud that seemed ready to burst upon us, and brought in their train, order and tranquility, and introduced the present calm and flourishing state of affairs, do we not see an immediate change in the conduct of persons? In some, an apparent indifference; in others, a feigned moderation, who are continually deploring the effects of party spirit, and representing that there is no difference of opinion between the two great parties in the U. States, and advising a coalition.-----Behold here, says the Republican, whose faith, like a real Christian, worketh by love----Behold here, the *Man of Sin* !-----The intelligent expositor of Scripture, does not say the *Man of Sin* is the open and boisterous opposer of Christianity---it is the *neutral*, lukewarm, pretended, and hypocritically candid professor, who, under the robe of his profession, and the convolutions of its folds, conceals a deep and deadly enmity. Just

so in the political Bible---the *man of sin*, is not the open Federalist, the decided opposer; it is the deceiving, hesitating, indecisive professor; it is he who pays lip-service to candor and moderation, who takes the rear ground, and waits to be dragged or pushed into action, against the adversaries of republicanism. The chastity of the Republican who hesitates, is lost.

But are the People to be entrapped by the cobweb stratagems of the Man of Sin? Do they not see, under the coverings of candor and moderation, concealed artifice and intrigue? Can they be made to believe, that the difference between the parties is all imaginary, and solely occasioned by the blindness of indiscriminating zeal?---and that the actors in past scenes of tyranny, would not now re-act the same part, if opportunity presented?

In examining the fitness of a candidate for office, we must view him while invested with power, or in times of national distress and alarm, and his conduct then must be made the standard of our decision. The sentiments of individuals on any particular subject, may be discovered by their manner of expression, and action, and their opinions upon collateral subjects;---for so mechanically do the outward tokens of the mind,

adjust themselves to the emotions within, that it requires more than common art to impose upon the discerning. If a person feels a warm attachment to a particular object, his fondness will manifest itself in every act, relative to the object of his affection, and even the lineaments of his countenance will mark the images of his mind. Thus in personal friendships, the cheerfulness and alacrity with which assistance is bestowed on a friend in distress, the delight which a brightened countenance exhibits at his prosperity, and the commiseration and overflowing sorrow, which accompany him in distress, irresistibly discover affection and love.

Here is a proper criterion to test the attachment of persons to our government ; and if we apply it at the present period, the *real* and *pretended* friend to the constitution may be discovered. If we search for the true Republican, not contenting himself with giving a cold, theoretical assent to the principles of our government, he will be known by the fervency of his zeal, and an unwearied attention to the duties of a citizen and a freeman----ever at his post----always vigilant----a rock amidst dangers and persecutions. He will rejoice at every advance in national happiness--and if vice and corruption

shall have found their way into our government, an unfeigned grief, an earnest anxiety, an unceasing activity to promote a remedy, fully evince his attachment. -----If we search for the opposite character, the *man of sin*, though under the veil of pretended attachment, hostility will look forth from his eye---with churlish and officious zeal he will dwell upon the errors of, and defects in, government; and if compelled by the justice or popularity of any measure, to *applaud*, his coldness of manner and expression, will plainly shew it is the effect of necessity and not of joy.-----Which of these descriptions of people, is it, that are continually sounding in our ears, the people are unfit to be intrusted with power?---who are continually ridiculing this fundamental principle of republicanism, that the people are the only proper judges of the measures pursued, and the conduct of public officers?-----Can he be a friend to that system, who discredits the foundation on which it is built? Are they the enemies or friends of our government, who delight to dwell upon the inconsistencies and ingratitude of republics? Is it the true republican, that we daily witness, lamenting that there is no stimulus to genius, no incentive to ambition, in our government; and

disdainfully speaking of American genius and literature, and drawing insidious comparisons between this and other governments? Let the people, as they value the past sufferings of Republicans, be sure they give to this class of men no official consequence.

Let cold hearted, plodding pedants, and friends of monarchy, delight in degrading American literature and genius; let them ridicule the simplicity of the American government, habits, and manners, because divested of those tinselled ornaments, and mystical coverings, which serve only to insnare and deceive, and which give birth to the necessity of confining the management of government, to the hands of particular men, who can then impose themselves upon the world, as men of superior wisdom and virtue—who can rise on the ruins of truth—become celebrated by prostrating the noblest faculties of man—and by shutting the door to investigation, effectually guard against an exposure of their villainies. Let them take pleasure in contemplating Egyptian science and splendor, or Babylonish magnificence.—Let them forget the proud trophies of American patriotism, valor, and science, which in thirty years, has lifted a few weak and divided colonies,

from the lap of ignorance and despotism, to the rank of Freemen, and the foremost seats in the Temple of Science, to wander in the classic fields of Greece, and Rome, and there repose with unsatiated delight, and undiscerning veneration, upon the monuments of Grecian and Roman arts and sciences, and undisturbed enjoy the gratification of eulogizing their poets, orators, and philosophers—of admiring their laws, customs and manners. Let them deplore, that the splendid eras of a Pericles, and Augustus, are past—that no Phidias or Correggio exist, to give to the marble and canvas, animation and life—yet, let them reflect, that amidst this blaze of science, a great part of the people were in the most abject state of ignorance and wretchedness; incapable of judging of its utility, or appreciating its worth.

It is the boast of every genuine American, that in his country alone, science has become subservient to public utility, the handmaid of virtue, the promoter of sound morality, and the bestower of public and private happiness. That it is not here a transient blaze, that brightens along the path of adulation, or illumines the road of despotism—that polishes the chains of the despot, and renders his subjects the more

willing victims—but that it spreads its banquet to all, and invites them to become partakers—that like the electric spark, it shoots through every member of our political body, giving health and vigor to the whole—penetrates the veil of life, relieves despairing distress and suffering virtue—removes the veil of ignorance, from the indigent, and becomes a main pillar in the Fabric of Freedom.

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*FINIS.*  
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A HYMN, FOR THE 4TH OF JULY, 1806.

BY A. SELDEN.

—s—
Tune—*Mount Vernon.*
—s—

TO GOD, our sovereign Lord, we raise,
The loudest anthems of our praise,
And all his wond'rous dealings tell ;
Who taught our fathers to withstand
Their foes, subdue and till the land,
And here in peace securely dwell.

He made their flocks and herds increase—
Their friends had rest—their children peace—
He made their corn and wine o'erflow ;
The rarest sweets of distant shores,
Were safely wafted to their doors,
And blessings crown'd their toils below.

But wicked men, who pined to see,
Their neighbors *happy, blest, and free*,
Beheld our sires with envious eye ;
Their fleets and armies cross'd the waves,
To conquer, spoil, and make them slaves,
And drench the land in crimson dye.

Then heaven-born freedom fired the soul,
They stood unmov'd above control,
And dar'd the champions to the field ;
He taught their hands with dreadful might,
To aim the deathful javelin right—
And make the murd'rous minions yield.

Then **INDEPENDENCE**, babe of Heav'n,
 The choicest good to mortals giv'n,
 Was nurs'd in youthful robes, and *blest*;
 The *Infant* grew, in love with men—
 Our God vouchsaf'd his watchful ken—
 And ev'ry age the youth carest.

The aged worship'd near the shrine,
 With sacred gifts—and songs divine—
 And pour'd the rich libations forth—
 While shouting millions rais'd the voice—
 Tb' immortal offspring was their choice—
 Far from the southward to the north.

Fair *Peace*, descended from above,
 And bade the slaughtering foe remove---
 Their hostile bands re-cross'd the main;
She hover'd o'er her infant brood,
 Attended every step with good,
 And all the land had rest from pain.

The *arts* and *sciences* prevail'd---
 The deep *arcana* was assail'd---
 Discov'ries bade the leaves unrol:
 When Man is free, his soul's inclin'd
 As much to aid the human mind,
 As the touch'd needle seeks the pole.

The *party tool*, the crouching *slave*,
 The *king*, the *lord*, and princely knave,
 Are leagu'd, at war with every good;
 Their sordid views---their mean pursuits,
 Debases men below the brutes,
 And robs the toilsome hands of food.

The wretch, who dar'd to rob the shrine,
Inscrib'd "*To Liberty divine*,"

Shall be accurst---his name shall rot---
And all the *few* his rank: can boast,
Shall seek Oblivion's haggard coast,
In gloomy silence lie forgot.

But we will praise th' Almighty THOU,
Who broke the snare, and let us through---

And made the wily fowler flee :
And call'd his favorite *Son** to reign,
Over the fertile, vast domain
Of those, who nobly would be free.

Let ev'ry voice with loud acclaim,
Join full to laud our *Maker's* name ;
His love, to all the nations tell ;---
That ev'ry *people, sea, and land*,
The sweets of *peace* may soon command,
And INDEPENDENCE with them dwell.

* MR. JEFFERSON.

B



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